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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 BIB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 FCC-01 OTPE-00 TRSE-00
/069 W
----------026376 151416Z /47 42
R 142350Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5047

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E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: ETEL, ETRD, SCUL, CA, PINT
SUBJECT: CANADIAN TELEVISION POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REF: OTTAWA A-215

1. SUMMARY. THERE ARE STRONG INDICATIONS THAT CANADA IS CONSIDERING IN A STUDY BEING PREPARED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE NEW WAYS TO EXPAND PRODUCTION OF DOMESTIC TV PROGRAMMING TD SUPPORT GOAL OF NATIONAL UNITY AS DISCUSSED REFAIR. ANY ACTION TAKEN IN THIS SPHERE MUST RESULT IN REDUCED USE OF US TV PROGRAM MATERIAL. THE DEPARTMENT'S COMMENT AND INSTRUCTIONS ON ACTIONS THE EMBASSY MAY TAKE TO MAKE GOC AWARE OF OUR CONCERNS ARE REQUESTED. END SUMMARY

2. SINCE REFAIR SENT, EMBASSY HAS BECOME AWARE THROUGH OFFICIAL OF COMMUNICATIONS DEPT THAT A STUDY IS BEING PREPARED IN SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE ON FUTURE TELEVISION POLICY. THIS STUDY, FROM WHAT WE HAVE SO FAR LEARNED, COULD VERY WELL INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRESSIVELY MORE STRINGENT CONTROLS ON NON-CANADIAN CONTENT OF BROADCASTS. THIS WOULD MAKE AVAILABLE MORE FUNDS FOR DOMESTIC
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TELEVISION PRODUCTION IN CANADA, THUS MAKING CANADIAN TELEVISION A MORE POWERFUL POLITICAL TOOL FOR USE IN ENHANCING NATIONAL UNITY.

3. OUR FIRST INQUIRY TO SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE ON STUDY WAS MET WITH DENIAL OF ITS EXISTENCE. FINALLY EXISTENCE OF TELEVISION POLICY STUDY WAS ACKNOWLEDGED BUT

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OFFICIAL SAID IT WAS CONFIDENTIAL AND NO DETAILS COULD BE PROVIDED. LATER TALKS WITH SENIOR DEPT OF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICIALS PRODUCED COMMENT THAT NO ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW TELEVISION POLICIES ARE IMMINENT. THERE WAS NO REFERENCE TO STUDY BY SECRETARY OF STATE. HOWEVER, THE DOC OFFICIALS SAID THEY ARE PRESENTLY COLLECTING DATA TO ASSESS EFFECT OF TAX PROVISIONS OF BILL C-58 ON TV PROGRAMMING AND ADVERTISING REVENUES. THEY REASONED THAT SINCE THE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF THIS DATA WILL TAKE SOME TIME, AND ANY CHANGE IN TV POLICY SHOULD BE BASED ON ITS RESULTS, THEY WOULD NOT EXPECT NEW POLICIES, IF ANY, COULD BE IMPLEMENTED FOR SOME TIME (THE IMPLICATION WAS NO EARLIER THAN MID-1978).

4. COMMENT: THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S STUDY, ABOUT WHICH WE ARE SEEKING TO LEARN MORE, AND COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA BY DEPT OF COMMUNICATIONS COULD WELL BE RELATED. WHAT THE DATA ON EXPERIENCE UNDER THE TAX PROVISIONS OF C-58 WILL SHOW OR HOW THEY MIGHT EVENTUALLY AFFECT ANY NEW, RESTRICTIVE CANADIAN TV POLICY IS NOT CLEAR. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT CANADA IS LIKELY TO TAKE AN INCREASINGLY MORE PROTECTIVE POSITION TOWARD DOMESTIC TV PRODUCTION, IF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (AND TAXPAYER) IS WILLING TO BEAR THE COST. DEPT OF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN TV PRODUCTION HAVE POINTED OUT THAT MOST MAJOR COUNTRIES USE TV AS A POWERFUL UNIFYING
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MEDIUM. CANADIAN POLITICIANS, THEY TOLD US, HAVE YET TO REALIZE HOW IMPORTANT THIS CAN BE IN CREATING AND FOSTER-ING A NATIONAL IDENTITY.

5. IN VIEW OF PRSENT CANADIAN PREOCCUPATION WITH NATIONAL UNITY, WE WOULD BE WELL ADVISED TO PREPARE OURSELVES FOR THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THERE WILL BE MORE RATHER THAN FEWER RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF US-PRODUCED TV PROGRAMMING IN CANADA IN THE FUTURE.

6. ACTION: REFAIR SUGGESTED WASHINGTON AGENCIES REVIEW WITH US TV INDUSTRY WHAT COMMERICAL INTERESTS ARE AT STAKE SO THAT WE MIGHT MAKE GOC AWARE OF US CONCERNS. IN VIEW OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WE URGE THIS ACTION BE TAKEN NOW AND REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS ON APPROACHES WE MAY MAKE TO GOC ON THIS ISSUE. GOC IS WELL AWARE OF LINKAGE MADE BY SOME US MEMBERS OF CONGRESS BETWEEN BORDER TV ISSUE AND US TAX TREATMENT OF FOREIGN CONVENTION EXPENSES. WE INTEND TO UNDERSCORE RISKS OF CONGRESSIONAL REACTION GOC WOULD RUN IN ADOPTING RESTRICTIVE TV POLICY. ENDERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TELEVISION, POLICIES
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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TAGS: ETEL, ETRD, SCUL, PINT, CA
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